

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 23-31 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 23, 26 and 30 are amended.

Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 23-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over East, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,901,829) in view of Kemeny (U.S. Patent No. 5,560,162) and JP 2000-319472 (the equivalent of U.S. Patent No. 6,548,188). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 23 is directed to a friction damper comprising a base body adapted to be capable of being attached to one of a pair of members which are displaced relative to each other; first and second supports each secured to said base body and having a through hole, said first support having only one slit communicating with said through hole of said first support so that the diameter of said through hole of said first support can be reducible, said first and second supports being mutually adjacent in an axial direction; a rod which extends through the through hole of said first and second supports, is movable in the axial direction with respect to said first and second supports, and is adapted to be capable of being attached to another one of the pair of members; and a friction member which has a hollow cylindrical portion interposed between said first support and said rod in the through hole of said first support, and only one collar united with said hollow cylindrical portion, said first and second supports between which said collar is disposed, clamping said collar so as to fix said friction member immovably with respect to relative movement of said rod in the axial direction with respect to said base body, said hollow cylindrical portion of said friction member having only one slit extending from one end face to another end face thereof in the axial direction so that the diameter of said hollow cylindrical portion can be reducible, and said hollow cylindrical portion of said friction member further

having a mesh base material disposed on a radially outer peripheral surface side thereof and a synthetic resin-made sliding layer filling meshes of said base material and formed on one surface of said base material, said hollow cylindrical portion of said friction member covering a surface defining the through hole of said first support from one axial end of said first support, at a position of which said collar is united with said hollow cylindrical portion, over another axial end of said first support, said sliding layer being disposed on radially inner peripheral surface side of said hollow cylindrical portion so as to be brought into contact with said rod slidably in the axial direction. This structure results in a friction damper that has a simple structure and stable damping characteristics over a long period of time.

East, Jr. et al. discloses an axial friction brake designed to minimize piping dynamic motion while accommodating thermal expansion. Applicants appreciate that the Examiner has acknowledged that East, Jr. et al. lacks the disclosure of a cylindrical friction member having only one slit, one collar and a mesh-like base material disposed on a radially outer peripheral surface side thereof and a synthetic resin-made sliding layer filling meshes of the base material and formed on one surface of the base material.

In addition, East, Jr. et al. lacks the disclosure of the specific combination in which the first and second supports between which the collar is disposed, clamp the collar so as to fix the friction member immovably with respect to relative movement of the rod in the axial direction with respect to the base body, the hollow cylindrical portion of the friction member covering a surface defining the through hole of the first support from an axial end of the first support over another axial end of the first support, at which the collar is united with the hollow cylindrical portion as set forth in claim 1.

Neither Kemeny nor JP 2000-319472 makes up for this subject matter, and nor was it relied upon for such.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

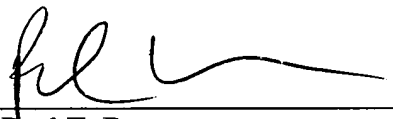
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all the claims are patentable and that the entire application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, he is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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